

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SANTIA 03448 222041Z

21

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EA-06 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

(ISO) W

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R 222013Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3351

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 3448

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, US, CB

SUBJECT: IMPACT OF MAYAGUEZ INCIDENT IN CHILE

1. AS INDICATED IN USIS PRESS REPORTING, MAYAGUEZ AFFAIR HAS BEEN GREETED IN CHILE WITH EXTRAORDINARY ENTHUSIASM. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, GOC AND SUPPORTING CHILEAN OPINION REGARD THEMSELVES AS FRONTLINE FIGHTERS IN LIFE-OR-DEATH STRUGGLE AGAINST "INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM." CHILEANS REGARD US AS NECESSARILY CAST IN THE ROLE OF FREE WORLD LEADER IN THIS STRUGGLE, THOUGH AS THEY SEE IT THE AMERICAN WILL TO PROSECUTE IT IS CONFUSED AND WEAKENED BY US DETENTE POLICY.

2. NATURALLY, FROM THIS STANDPOINT, CHILEANS REGARDED COMMUNIST VICTORIES IN CAMBODIA AND SOUTH VIETNAM WITH GREAT AND INCREASING DISMAY. CHILEANS FELT KEENLY THAT US POWER AND PRESTIGE, ON WHICH THEY BELIEVE THEY MUST DEPEND, HAD BEEN IMPAIRED. ACCORDINGLY, SUCCESS OF MAYAGUEZ OPERATION CAME AS A TONIC, LIFTING CHILEAN SPIRITS AND CHILEAN EXPECTATIONS THAT THEY COULD STILL COUNT ON STRONG US POSTURE TO OPPOSE COMMUNIST EXCESSES.

3. MILITARY LEADERSHIP OF GOC REACTED VERY STRONGLY IN ABOVE SENSE. AT DINNER AT AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE MAY 15, ADMIRAL MERINO, JUNTA MEMBER AND COMMANDER OF

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PAGE 02 SANTIA 03448 222041Z

CHILEAN NAVY, SAID HE HAD SENT MESSAGE TO ALL CHILEAN

SHIPS AND NAVY POSTS WELCOMING VICTORIOUS US OPERATION
AS EVIDENCE THAT USG READY TO FIGHT FOR ITS IDEALS. AT ANOTHER
SOCIAL FUNCTION A FEW NIGHTS LATER, GENERAL BERDICHEWSKY, CHIEF
OF STAFF OF AIR FORCE, WARMLY CONGRATULATED AMBASSADOR
FOR USG SUCCESS. MANY OF OUR CONTACTS HAVE TAKEN THIS
LINE WITH US.
POPPER

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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